

SAN BENITO COUNTY

2008 WMA base Funding Work Plan

San Benito County Weed Management Area

January 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009

Primary Contract Lead Person(s): Ronald Ross, Deputy Agricultural Commissioner, (831) 637-5344, 3224 Southside Rd. Hollister, CA 95023, email: ron@agcom.co.san-benito.ca.us. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office will be handling the contract and the invoicing for this workplan.

Project Leads (name, phone number, and address):

Project 1 Ronald Ross

Project 2 Ronald Ross

Project 3 Brent Johnson, National Park Service, (831) 389-4486, 5000 Hwy. 146, Paicines, CA 95043

WMA Structure and Partners:

The San Benito County Weed Management Area, started with a countywide weed survey in 2001, then started work on specific weed species in 2002. The group meets quarterly on the third Thursday of the month. Current partners include:

- San Benito County Agricultural Commissioner
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- San Benito County Resource Conservation District
- Caltrans
- California State Parks
- Bureau of Land Management
- University of California Cooperative Extension
- San Benito County Cattleman's Association
- San Benito County Farm Bureau
- National Park Service
- San Benito County Public Works Department

This workplan contains funding for three projects. Project 1 and project 2 provides funding for two existing WMA projects. Project 3 provides funding for a new project which is located on the Pinnacles National Monument. The projects are described in detail below.

Project Title: Project 1 - Tequesquita Slough Arundo Eradication

Project Goal:

To eradicate Arundo (Giant Reed) in the Tequesquita Slough watershed north of Hollister.

Project Objectives and Methods:

Starting in 2003, work was done to begin eradication efforts on Arundo found in the Tequesquita Slough watershed. Over 8 miles of stream was surveyed and treated, from the headwaters at Arroyo de Las Viboras to Shore Road. Large clumps of Arundo were cut by crews, stacked and burned. Herbicides were applied to the remaining stands of Arundo. Spot treatments of herbicides will continue until the weed is eradicated.

The WMA is applying for this funding to continue the survey and spot treatment of re-sprouts and any new finds in this watershed.

Task 1: Personnel will survey previous infestation sites for Arundo re-sprouts or missed plants. The survey will also continue in the up stream area of the watershed to ensure that new patches of Arundo is not growing beyond the project area.

Task 2: Continue chemical treatment of any Arundo found upstream from Shore Road.

Task 3: Record any new locations of Arundo with a GPS to update the existing GIS map of this project.

Equipment:

An existing 100-gallon skid sprayer will be used to treat any re-sprouts that are found in the survey. This sprayer (which was purchased by the WMA with the initial SB 1740 funding), is mounted on a 4x4 pickup owned by the County Ag. Commissioner's Office.

Mapping:

See attached map for areas where Arundo have been removed and/or treated. Any new finds will be recorded on a GPS and an updated map will be prepared and available.

Project Title: Project 2 – Priest Valley Scotch Thistle Eradication

Project Goal:

To eradicate an existing infestation of Scotch Thistle in the Priest Valley area of San Benito County.

Project Objectives and Methods:

Personnel from the San Benito & Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the California Department of Food & Agriculture have been working on this infestation for several years. This infestation straddles the San Benito/Monterey County line in extreme southern San Benito County. Now, the County and State forces have been augmented with additional help from the WMA. WMA personnel hike into the area infested with Scotch Thistle and it is either removed with a shovel or treated with herbicides. Their locations are recorded by a GPS unit to assist in the follow-up efforts.

Task 1: While performing control work, personnel will survey previous infestation sites for Scotch Thistle. The survey will also continue in the surrounding area to ensure that the Scotch Thistle has not spread beyond the project area.

Task 2: Continue chemical and mechanical treatments of Scotch Thistle found in this area.

Task 3: Record locations of Scotch Thistle with a GPS to update the existing GIS map of this area.

Equipment:

Most of the eradication work is done mechanically along with some herbicides applied from an All Terrain Vehicle. Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner's Office will furnish the herbicide for this application.

Mapping:

See attached map for areas where Scotch Thistle has been located. Any new finds will be recorded on a GPS and an updated map will be prepared and available.

Project Title: Project 3 – McCabe Canyon Invasive Plant Eradication

Project Goal: To eradicate five invasive weed species from the McCabe Canyon area of Pinnacles National Monument.

Project Objectives and Methods:

Over the last decade, Pinnacles National Monument has acquired over 10,000 additional acres of scenic and biologically diverse land. Within these new lands lies a canyon that contains an extensive field of intact native grasslands that is considered extremely rare in California. Several plant species found in the canyon are highly valued by Mutsun and other California Indian peoples for use in basketweaving. These include Whiteroot Sedge (*Carex barbarae*) and Deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*). However, the canyon is currently threatened by encroaching invasive plants.

Five high priority non-native species that have been targeted for control remain in the early stages of invasion in McCabe Canyon. There is significantly more suitable habitat for each of these species than the current status of each of these plants. Thus, it remains highly feasible to control each of these species within one to three years. Moreover, revegetation will not be necessary, as these species have not yet had an opportunity to significantly displace the native plant community.

Because these five weed species are not yet widespread, it will be possible to control them using hand pulling, weed trimmers and hand tools at this time. National Park Service staff will lead control efforts, with assistance from the San Benito Agricultural Commissioner's office. A weed crew from the American Conservation Experience (ACE) will be utilized for the bulk of the efforts. Their work will be supplemented by volunteer groups donating their time at organized weed pull days.

Below the canyon is an area that was recently acquired by the park from private owners. Invasive weeds are also found in this parcel. This area, also known as “the bottomlands”, is also targeted for invasive weed control. A supplemental funding grant application will be submitted for this region in addition to this workplan.

The five target species are:

Yellow Starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*)

Scattered individuals are throughout McCabe Canyon leading up to the deergrass and sedge beds. Yellow Starthistle will be treated using hand pulling throughout McCabe Canyon. Yellow starthistle will also be mapped and controlled in heavily infested sites in the Pinnacles Campground directly adjacent to McCabe Canyon. The long-term objective is to eradicate Yellow starthistle from McCabe Canyon.

Bull Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*)

The invasive species is scattered throughout McCabe canyon, and could displace the whiteroot sedge beds if allowed to establish there. Bull thistle will be treated using hand tools and hand pulling for three consecutive years. Follow-up treatment as necessary will continue after this time period.

Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*)

A single dense infestation approximately 10m² growing directly within the whiteroot sedge beds. This invader is difficult and costly to remove once it has become widespread. However, because it is still such a small infestation, it is feasible to control before it is spreads throughout the McCabe canyon riparian area. Control will be done by removing aboveground and below ground portions of the plant using hand tools such as loppers and shovels. The project objective for this species is to eradicate blackberry from the site and prevent Blackberry from spreading to other areas in McCabe Canyon and into the rest of the park.

Italian Thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*)

A single dense infestation lies within the McCabe Canyon. Control can be achieved throughout the canyon within the time frame of this project. The primary technique for removal of this species is handpulling and control using hand tools.

Field Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*)

This invasive is scattered throughout McCabe canyon, but has not been observed adjacent to the sedge beds or the deergrass field. The short-term objective with this species is to eradicate all populations of this species that occur within 0.5 km of the sedge beds and treat all mustard within the canyon.

Equipment:

Equipment costs will include the purchase of hand tools, fuel and accessories for weed trimmers (e.g. fuel mix, line). Other items will be provided by Pinnacles National Monument.

Mapping:

See attached map for current known weed locations. All areas treated and surveyed will be displayed on a map that will be submitted to all WMA partners and CDFA at the completion of the project.

Reporting:

A project report will be submitted at the completion of the contract and will include the following information: net acres and number of plants treated for each target species, gross area surveyed, control tool utilized, and photographs.